

September 23, 2005

Dr. Jeff Koenings, Director  
Washington Department of Fish and Game  
600 Capitol Way N.  
Olympia, WA. 98501-1091



Dear Dr. Koenings:

With today's propensity to dwell on the negative particularly regarding government agencies, seldom do those doing good work receive the recognition that they deserve. On such person is Game Biologist Mike Keller. Mike manages the public hunting land lease on the Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch in Eastern Washington. I met Mike in 1999 when I assumed the Executive Director position of the Ranch. Mike was helpful and available to address my many questions regarding the hunting easement that transverses the Ranch. He was patient with my lack of understanding and accommodating when I sought explanations. Over the years we have worked on numbers issues involving the easement. Mike has never wavered from supporting multiple use of the property as well as protecting the habitat for the many species that live there.

Numerous times sensitive issues could have gone sour, but Mike's smiling way and quiet persistence mitigated these issues for a reasonable conclusion every time. Mike has also been an ambassador for the kids on the Ranch. Through his support, placed children have had the opportunity to hunt and trap on the range.

Mike is an idea person. Over the last few years he has recommended a number of accomplishable ideas to improve the habitat as well as allow for grazing and other uses. His continued interest has and remains appreciated.

Mike does not flaunt his authority the way many other officials do. His manner is inclusive and middle ground oriented, which places him in good stead with the Ranch Board of Directors, the Trustees and the farmers that lease property inside the easement. Orchestrating the many conflicting interests requires political savvy, mature judgement and patience - Mike has done all these things with excellence. It is because of this that the Ranch has participated in the "hunt by permission only" program over the years.

Although Mike does not live in the "Basin", he is a frequent enough visitor to be known and respected by the many who use the easement and have had the chance to meet him. He remains an excellent ambassador for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, not only reflecting credit on himself but his colleagues and supervisors as well.

It is hoped that you will endorse this letter to Mike through his chain of command such that he can receive the recognition he deserves for a job well done.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Craig R. Lewis".

Craig R. Lewis  
Executive Director

CRL/crl

CC: Dave Brittell, Assistant Director DFW

509.269.4211 • 888.269.2600 • Fax 509.269.4252

e-mail: bmyr@3-cities.com

131 Memorial Lane • Mesa, Washington 99343-9545